

Is *Ypsolopha asperella* (Linn., 1761)  
(Lep.: Plutellinae) extinct in Britain?

By S. C. S. BROWN\*

C. W. Dale (1873) claimed that his father, J. C. Dale, was the first to take *asperella* in Britain. This was at Glanvilles Wootton, Dorset, where he took the first of a series on the 8th September 1815. However, it had already been described and figured by Donovan (1801), who gave it the name *falcatella*, but the only remark he made on its natural history was: "Very scarce and undescribed".

Stephens (1834) writes under *Hypsolopha asperella*: "I possess a fine pair of this insect, which I obtained many years since from Mr. Dale, who captured them, with others, I believe, at Glanvilles Wootton, in August"; Curtis (1835) says: "This beautiful little moth has been taken by Mr. Dale and myself amongst the lichen on Apple-trees in his Orchard at Glanvilles Wootton, the 8th September and the 1st and 17th October"; and Wood (1839), who figures the imago in colour, writes: "Taken by Mr. Dale at Glanvilles Wootton in August".

Humphreys and Westwood (1845) state: "The caterpillar feeds on apple and other fruit trees, and the moth appears in the autumn. Taken by Mr. Dale in Dorsetshire etc." They figure the insect and add that the specimen shown was from the cabinet of Mr. Bentley. Bentley was a long-standing friend of Dale, and it is quite possible that the *asperella* came from Glanvilles Wootton as a gift from him.

The next mention in the literature refers to its occurrence in Herefordshire. In this Mrs. Hutchinson (1866) wrote that she had taken one specimen at Leominster.

In 1878, C. W. Dale published his *History of Glanvilles Wootton*, in which he gives the dates of the captures there. They are: 8th September 1815; 1st October 1819; 8th and 9th September 1821; 17th October 1827, one by Mr. Curtis; and the last on 17th September 1831. A total of six specimens in 16 years. Although assiduously searched for over a long period, it was never found there again.

Mrs. Hutchinson (1882) reported that she had taken it again in September 1881, at her residence, Grantfield, Leominster, adding that it had last been seen there in 1868 though searched for annually. C. W. Dale (1881) records that on 30th August 1881, he captured a pair of *asperella* in Herefordshire.

Wood (1902) summarising its occurrence in Herefordshire says: "Of this very rare and beautiful insect, eighteen examples have been taken at different times by Mrs. Hutchinson and her family, usually in the autumn, but more than once in the spring after hibernation"; and adds that the first one was taken at Leominster in 1865 and that "it continued to be taken at intervals . . . up to 1886". He goes on to say that a "large empty cocoon of a *Cerostoma*, almost certainly

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belonging to this species, was once found at *Tarrington* by the present writer, attached to an apple leaf, so that the insect has probably a wider footing in the country".

In the Dale Collection, now at the Hope Department, University Museum, Oxford, are six specimens. Two of these are labelled "J. C. Dale 1821 Glanvilles Wootton", and four "C. W. Dale 1881 Leominster". There is a further specimen there in the reference collection from the Spilsbury Collection, but without data.

In the British collection at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), are 12 specimens, unfortunately all without adequate data. Two in the J. F. Stephens Collection are most probably the two given to him by Dale from Glanvilles Wootton.

From the available records it would thus appear that some two dozen specimens only of *asperella* have ever been taken, and then only in two very restricted localities, one in Dorset and the other in Herefordshire, and that no captures have been made anywhere in the British Isles since 1886. However, I think it might yet be rediscovered in the western counties if looked for in old and neglected apple orchards in the autumn.

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THE MUSLIN MOTH: *DIAPHORA MENDICA* CLERCK IN SEPTEMBER. — An interesting find in the m.v. trap here on the morning of the 8th September — the same morning I took the first Kent *Rhyacia simulans* — was a fresh specimen of the Muslin Moth, *Diaphora mendica*. Being several months after its normal emergence period it must surely have been an example of a second brood.—Dr. I. A. WATKINSON, 148 The Street, Boughton-under-Blean, Faversham, Kent.